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ABSTRACT

The College of the Desert (California) has created a multi-station technology training and development facility for faculty. HyperStudio has been adopted as the introductory tool for multimedia/hypermedia authoring for the following reasons: (1) the card/stack metaphor used by HyperStudio is easy for novices to understand and familiar to users of other authoring tools; (2) in place of programming languages or scripting, HyperStudio uses a friendly and intuitive interface that prompts users to make decisions about how their stack looks and operates; (3) multimedia objects, such as sound, animation, and video tape, are very easy to import and use; (4) HyperStudio stacks can be authored to run on both PC and Macintosh platforms; (5) HyperStudio stacks can be posted and run in their entirety on the World Wide Web; (6) Web Uniform Resource Locators (URLs) and other software programs can be accessed from within HyperStudio; and (7) training users to author in HyperStudio takes significantly less time than it does to train them in higher end authoring tools. HyperStudio offers support for the most commonly used graphic file formats and the ability to export stacks as HTML documents for viewing on the Web. It also has the ability to create text hyperlinks or buttons, using a menu to select from a variety of functions. (MES)

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(Relatively) Painless Computer-Assisted Instruction With HyperStudio

Presented at the 1998 Annual Conference of the
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At College of the Desert, our integration of technology into instruction has followed a pattern that is similar to many other higher education institutions. Our faculty members are trained in basic computer/technology literacy and are taught how to use operating systems, word processors, e-mail packages, internet browsers and presentation graphics programs. Most of the faculty introduce computer-based technology into their instruction by converting their existing visual materials, such as overhead transparencies and 35mm slides, into computer presentations with Microsoft PowerPoint. Others rely on commercial CD-ROM courseware. In recent months, a number of our faculty members have begun development of web sites and on-line courses. Frustrated with the inability to find programs that match their course objectives and with the current bandwidth limitations of the Internet, an increasing number of faculty have expressed interest in creating their own computer-assisted instructional modules.

College of the Desert has created the Technology & Learning Center (TLC) as a multi-station technology training and development facility for the College's faculty. A number of multimedia/hypermedia authoring tools are available in the Center, including Multimedia Toolbook, Authorware and Director Studio. Unfortunately, the steep learning curve and programming/scripting that is required by most of these programs intimidate many potential users. We have, therefore, seen fit to adopt the following philosophy regarding technology tools:

Use the easiest tool that will get the job done.

This philosophy has led us to adopt HyperStudio as our introductory tool for multimedia/hypermedia authoring. In this paper, I will briefly outline some of the reasons for adoption of HyperStudio and discuss several of the features of this robust, yet extremely user-friendly tool.

Reasons for Adopting HyperStudio

- The card/stack metaphor used by HyperStudio is easy for novices to understand and is familiar to users of other authoring tools, such as HyperCard & Toolbook
- In place of programming languages or scripting, HyperStudio uses a friendly and intuitive interface that prompts users to make decisions about how their stack looks and operates
- Multimedia objects, such as sound, animation, and video, are very easy to import and use
- HyperStudio stacks can be authored to run on both PC and Macintosh platforms
- HyperStudio stacks can be posted and run in their entirety on the World Wide Web
- Web URLs and other software programs can be accessed from within HyperStudio
- Training users to author in HyperStudio takes significantly less time than it does to train them in "higher end" authoring tools

(Relatively) Painless C.A.I. Development

Although HyperStudio is very easy to use, it is an authoring tool, not an instructional design guide. How "painless" the development of C.A.I. actually is will depend on the amount of "front end" design that takes place before HyperStudio is run. Assuming that needs have been assessed, audiences and tasks have been analyzed, objectives have been specified, and content has been selected, HyperStudio affords a simple, yet effective way to put it all together.

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Creating a Stack

HyperStudio uses a card/stack metaphor that is familiar to users of Hypercard and Toolbook. For those who are unfamiliar, a HyperStudio "stack" can be thought of as a computer-based rolodex with the capacity for nearly unlimited numbers of cards. Each card can contain text, still graphics, animated graphics, video, sound, hyperlinks and interactive buttons. Cards can be accessed non-sequentially via hyperlinks or "go to" button actions.

Graphics

HyperStudio offers support for the most commonly used graphic file formats, including .gif, .jpg, .bmp, .pict, .tiff, and .pcx. Graphics can be imported as backgrounds for cards, as clip art or as "graphic objects." The latter can be animated or assigned various actions (such as playing a sound, playing a video, going to a different card or calling an internet address). HyperStudio supports both cell and path animation of graphic objects.

Buttons

The real power of HyperStudio lies in the ability to create text hyperlinks or buttons, in which the user can perform many interactive functions. Buttons can take the form of visible rectangular buttons or invisible buttons which can be used to assign interactive properties to selected text and/or graphic images (such as different parts of a map). Once a button type has been selected (including text, colors and icons for visible buttons), a menu automatically pops up to prompt the user to place the button in the desired location on the card.

Button Actions

Most hypermedia authoring tools require a special programming or scripting language to assign functions to buttons. HyperStudio, in contrast, automatically generates a "button action" menu whenever a button is added. This menu gives the developer a choice of over 20 different functions that a button can perform. Several of these are listed below:

- *Go to a different card in the stack*: When this is selected, HyperStudio prompts the developer to select one of 27 different transition effects
- *Go to a different stack*: This function can be used to link a stack to other stacks
- *Go to a different program*: Other programs, such as word processors or spreadsheets, can be opened from within HyperStudio
- *Play a sound*: HyperStudio can play digital sound files and also has a built-in sound recording utility
- *Play a video or movie*: HyperStudio can import digital video files from disc or can control a videodisc player
- *Play animation*: HyperStudio can play both frame and path animated sequences
- *Testing functions*: This feature allows HyperStudio to keep track of correct and incorrect answers and generates a text file with user scores
- *Button Runner*: This is a button macro command that executes multiple button actions with a single click
- *HideShow*: This feature allows graphics and/or text objects (such as pop-up dialogue boxes) to appear and disappear
- *CDPlay*: HyperStudio can control external audio CD players
- *Netpage*: This allows the user to go to a specific web URL. HyperStudio first starts Netscape Navigator or Microsoft Internet Explorer and accesses the specified URL.

Export Web Page

A feature added to the latest version of HyperStudio is the ability to export stacks as HTML documents for viewing on the web. HyperStudio can be used to create static web pages or, with the use of the HyperStudio plug in, can display all of the sounds, videos, animations and other effects right from within the web browser, without the need for JavaScript, Real Audio or other enhancements.

More Info

To learn more about HyperStudio and receive a free evaluation copy, point your web browser to Roger Wagner Publishing's web site at http://www.hyperstudio.com

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